

WESTERN YELLOWSTRIPED ARMYWORM *Lepidoptera: Noctuidae* *Spodoptera praefica*

DESCRIPTION

Adults have gray or brown forewings with slate or buff colored markings. Hind wings are silvery-gray. The wingspan is 35 to 40 mm. Mature **larvae** are about 40 mm long, with a faint white or red mid-line stripe on the top of the body. Black triangular marks are present on each side of the mid-line on each segment except the prothorax. These are bordered below by a white stripe on each side. There is a prominent black stripe along each side bordered below by an orange-brown stripe. Larvae have an inverted white "Y" on the front of the head.



Western yellowstriped armyworm larva



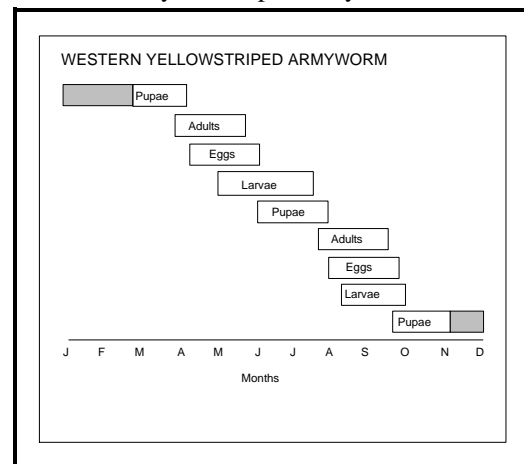
Western yellowstriped armyworm adult

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

Larvae feed on plant foliage and are often aggregated on a few plants where complete defoliation may occur. They are general feeders, but are most serious on clover, alfalfa, mint, sugarbeets; vegetables such as potatoes, beans, peas, and lentils; and seed crops such as sugarbeet, pea, and alfalfa.

DISTRIBUTION AND LIFE HISTORY

This species is distributed throughout the western United States and British Columbia. This pest overwinters in the soil as a pupa. Moths emerge in March and April and lay eggs in masses on the foliage. Larvae feed on the foliage for six to eight weeks during May, June, and early July, then pupate in the soil. Larvae frequently feed on the terminal leaves and buds. Adults from the second generation emerge in mid-August and early September and lay eggs. The larvae that hatch from these eggs feed on plant foliage during late September and early October before entering the pupa stage to overwinter. There are two overlapping generations each year.



MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

This pest does not occur in damaging numbers every season. Young larvae may be found feeding on terminal leaves and buds during the day. Older larvae are usually found in trash on the soil surface. Larvae are most easily controlled when they are small and feeding on the upper plant foliage. Fields should be checked regularly during late May, June, and early July to detect small larvae. The presence of young larvae can be assessed with a sweep net, but sampling for older larvae should be done by looking

through trash on the soil surface. Populations of this and other armyworm and cutworm species may be controlled by naturally occurring parasites. Parasitized larvae can be distinguished from nonparasitized larvae only by dissection. Select some of the largest larvae from sweep or ground search samples, cut the head off and pull the larva apart. If the larva is parasitized, another smaller creamy-white larva of a parasite will be inside the cutworm larva. If time permits, larvae can be reared to determine the number parasitized. If a large percentage of larvae are parasitized, control may not be necessary.

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